

Ask Your Doctor

The Administration and Congressional Democrats are currently wheeling and dealing to implement a government-run health care system to “compete” against plans in the private market. As with every major medical decision, it is important that you discuss with your doctor the implications such a plan will have on your health care. The proposal will adversely impact the quality of health care you receive in your doctor’s office, hospital, and other medical facilities.

Under their plan, Democrats have proposed creating a powerful, unelected government health board that would tell physicians how to practice medicine. This board would have the power to decide which treatments patients could receive and at what cost.

Simply put, a government takeover of health care will radically change the health care landscape by rationing care and putting bureaucrats in charge of health care decisions instead of doctors. According to a study conducted by an independent research firm, it is estimated that 114 million Americans would lose their current private coverage as a result of a government-run plan.

Because a government-run health care system is estimated to cost trillions in taxpayer dollars, the Administration recently outlined new cuts to Medicare benefits, totaling over \$300 billion, including cuts to physicians and hospitals, to pay for this mass expansion. Cuts to Medicare will unduly affect our nation’s 44 million seniors and will limit, rather than expand, their access to quality health care.

Making matters worse, the Democrats’ government-run plan would reimburse doctors and hospitals at Medicare rates. The problem is that, on average, Medicare reimbursements to physicians and hospitals are 20 percent and 32 percent below those paid by private plans, respectively. In fact, it is estimated that Medicare hospital reimbursements are 6.9 percent below what it costs hospitals to provide care. Given the vast erosion of private health coverage caused by a government-run plan, a greater share of physician and hospital revenues would be based on Medicare’s chronic under-payments.

Further, because 114 million Americans would be forced out of higher reimbursing private plans and into a government-run plan that underpays physicians, it is estimated that hospitals will experience a 63 percent reduction in hospital net-income. As a result of payment cuts, bureaucratic mandates, and constant overhead operating costs, your doctor and hospital will be forced to downsize their office and facilities because they simply will not be able to afford the price tag that comes with government-run health care. And what is worse, this will translate into fewer services offered to you and your family and will limit access to your doctor.

As your doctor is clearly aware, Medicare is already a bureaucratic nightmare and adding millions of Americans to government rolls will only increase the complexities and hindrances to delivering quality care. A government-run health care system will place a Washington bureaucrat between you and your doctor and will limit the choices and life-saving medicines available to you and your family. Next time you consult your doctor for health care advice, talk to your doctor about what government-run health care would mean for you in the future—your doctor knows best.

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